

CALIFORNIA STATE APIARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Hilton Sacramento Arden West
2200 Harvard St Sacramento, CA 95815
November 17, 2015

The meeting of the California State Apiary Board was called to order at approximately 5:10 PM on November 17, 2015 in Sacramento, California by Committee Chair Roger Everett.

Board Members Present

Roger Everett, Chair, Terra Bella, CA
Bob Brandi, Los Banos, CA
Brian Ashurst, Westmoreland, CA
David Bradshaw, Visalia CA
Harold "Buzz" Landon, Richvale, CA
Courtney Albrecht, Board Secretary, CDFA

Members of the Public

Wendi Sullivan
Jackie Parke-Burriss

Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act

Courtney Albrecht and the Board acknowledged compliance with the Bagely-Keene Open Meeting Act, Pursuant to Government Code Section 11120-11132.

Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. A motion was made to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded. A vote was conducted with the following results:

Ayes: Roger Everett, Bob Brandi, Brian Ashurst, David Bradshaw, Harold "Buzz" Landon
Nays: None

Apiary Board Committee Reports

None

California Department of Food and Agriculture Report

Border Station Update

Water

Tulelake Station- The well has been replaced but minor water quality issues remain. Water may not be available for bees.

Yermo Station-The well is dry and unrepairable. Emergency water deliveries are for station operations only. Water is not available for bees.

Vidal Station-The well is low; water is not available for bees.

The water situation is the same as usual at all other stations.

Apiary Shipments in 2015

The CDFA Border Station program reports the number of shipments based on a calendar year. As of October 27, 2015, the total number of shipments for 2015 is 2,850. It is expected that the total number of shipments for the entire year will be approximately 3,000, which is typical for any given year.

Discussion followed regarding whether or not shipments of bees that originate in California and transit through another state would be inspected upon arrival back into the state, as is the case with vehicles traveling on Hwy 395 in northern California. Ms. Albrecht indicated that she would find out the answer to that question, but most likely the border station inspectors would ask the driver for the origin of the shipment, with California-origin shipments not needing to be inspected.

Pests Intercepted in 2015

To date in 2015, a total of 385 suspected pest specimens have been submitted to the CDFA laboratory for identification; a total of 304 shipments have been rejected. This equates to approximately 11% of all shipments in 2015 being rejected, which is a slightly higher rejection rate than normal. However, with additional shipments arriving throughout the remainder of the year, the rate may go down.

A partial breakdown of pests intercepted in 2015 is as follows:

Beetles and unidentifiable beetle larvae (30%); 87 small hive beetle
Ants (30%); 12 red imported fire ant
Unidentified moth larvae (11%)

A discussion followed regarding the handling of shipments when pests are found. Mr. Bob Brandi stated that some drivers were delayed at the stations for four hours.

Ms. Albrecht confirmed that for all collected specimens, the shipment is held pending an official identification from the scientists of the CDFA Plant Pest Diagnostics Laboratory. Official identification is required before action can be taken on the shipment. Laboratory confirmation of a pest (i.e. A and Q-rated) will result in a rejected shipment.

Ms. Albrecht stated that by using digital imagery and email, the “processing time” (e.g. the time a shipment is held pending identification of a submitted specimen) is reduced such that 82% of all held shipments are “processed” in less than three to four hours.

A discussion followed regarding the possibility of developing web-based software that could enable pre-identification of pest specimens in apiary shipments approaching inspection stations, resulting in some shipments not having to stop for inspection upon arrival at the station.

A question was asked regarding how many of the rejected shipments required reconditioning before being allowed to enter the state. Ms. Albrecht stated that she did not have that information, but that the majority of shipments that were rejected for pests were able to be reconditioned (cleaned, pressure-washed, etc) and allowed to enter. Discussion followed regarding the protocol for rejected shipments, and what happens for shipments rejected for single pests (i.e. one cereal leaf beetle), and for shipments that do not get inspected at the CDFA border inspection station, but are allowed to enter and be inspected by the destination county agricultural commissioner’s office. There were no motions based on this discussion.

California Department of Pesticide Regulation Brochures

Ms. Albrecht informed the board that CDFA was collaborating with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) to provide brochures, developed by CDPR, that will be given to drivers of all entering apiary shipments that pertain to the importance of registering the apiaries with the county agricultural commissioner's office upon arrival. The brochures provide the legal authority for requiring apiary registration, and discuss the importance of registering hives in an effort to protect bees from exposure to pesticides.

Healthy Pollinator Working Group

Ms. Albrecht provided the following summary of the June 2015 meeting: A total of 68 people participated, including participants from CDFA, UC Davis, USDA/NRCS, and many other agencies and organizations. Invited speakers were from UC Davis, CDFA, Project Apis m, Honeybee Health Coalition, and Pollinator Partnership. Participants were provided an opportunity to discuss and develop ideas and strategies toward promoting pollinator health in California. Key ideas shared by participants included:

- CDFA could facilitate and coordinate information sharing, and act as a hub for information sharing;
- Increase foraging opportunities;
- Build and support partnerships;
- Conduct outreach with stakeholders and commodity groups;
- Support technology for hive and resource management;
- Explore potential to fund a forage opportunities and an apiary program.

The report from Healthy Pollinator Working Group is available on the CDFA website, and was provided to the Secretary of CDFA and the president of the State Board of Agriculture.

Other CDFA Activities

Ms. Albrecht was invited to speak at the "Bee Aware" symposium hosted by the CDPR in November 2015. The general audience included bee keepers and pest control operators, and the theme of the meeting was "Communication, Cooperation, and Collaboration." Ms. Albrecht presented on the portions of the "Apiary Act" which provide authority for hive registration in California.

In November, 2015, Ms. Albrecht also participated in the USDA Healthy Pollinator Workshop, organized by USDA, Agricultural Research Service (USDA/ARS). The purpose of this workshop was to provide input to USDA/ARS on potential research topics for two new federal pollinator research scientists that will be housed at UC Davis. Ms. Albrecht shared the outcomes from CDFA's Healthy Pollinator Working Group, and participated in honing ideas for research topics for the two new scientists.

Apiary Brand Update

CDFA is beginning an effort to improve the functionality of the list of apiary brands registered with CDFA, and has asked for help with this effort from the California County Agricultural Commissioners and their staff who have experience utilizing this list for enforcement purposes. This effort is intended identify if and how the CDFA-issued apiary brands are used, to ensure that the list of apiary brands includes only current apiary brands registered with CDFA, and to provide a means of secure access to the current list by the county officials for enforcement purposes.

Discussion followed regarding the law pertaining to hives temporarily located in California, and whether or not CDFA's registered apiary list should remain in use. Ms. Albrecht stated that the law covered all hives, even those temporarily located within the state. Ms. Albrecht stated that the purpose of the CDFA-issued brand was to protect apiary owners against theft of apiary equipment, and to provide

authority for increased fines in the event of an apiary theft conviction. Ms. Albrecht stated that input from the County Agricultural Commissioners is critical in developing changes or improvements in the functionality of the list. Ms. Albrecht confirmed that branding equipment was not a requirement, but rather, an action that a bee keeper could take to help protect against theft of their apiary equipment.

Other Items

Board Membership

Ms. Albrecht provided the following expiration dates of the apiary board members' terms:

Terms expiring 2017: Bryan Ashurst; Bob Brandi

Terms expiring 2018: Roger Everett; David Bradshaw; Harold "Buzz" Landon

Discussion followed regarding selection of replacement apiary board members. Ms. Albrecht informed the Board that, as per the California Food and Agricultural Code, Section that, in selecting new Apiary Board members, the CDFA director shall solicit the views of the industry, including but not limited to recommendations from the California Bee Keepers Association.

Public Comments

Ms. Jackie-Parke Burris indicated that the Apiary Board should write a letter to the Secretary of CDFA (topic not specified) to bring attention to the existence of the Board.

Discussion followed regarding an issue involving censorship and the United States Department of Agriculture. Mr. Roger Everett asked if the Secretary of CDFA has taken a position on the issue. Ms. Albrecht responded that she was not familiar with the issue, and had not heard anything about the issue from CDFA. Mr. Everett asked if it would be appropriate to ask the Secretary to send a letter condemning the censorship of science to the USDA, if the Board should send such a letter, or if both letters should be sent.

Discussion continued, and it was determined that one course of action could be to submit a letter to USDA, requesting clarification on the issue in order to provide transparency and re-establish the industry's trust in the agency's research.

Mr. Everett explained that the issue involved a USDA scientist that may or may not have had information regarding the toxicity of certain products on bee life stages, and that the agency censored the information. Mr. Everett expressed a dissatisfaction regarding the funding of government research if it was going to be censored, and that, as a bee keeper, he needed information on the effects of pest products his bees so he could make decisions concerning his hives.

Ms. Albrecht indicated that, as per California Food and Agricultural Code section, the CDFA Apiary Board may make recommendations on CDFA's actions as they pertain to bees. The issue regarding the alleged censorship pertains to actions of the USDA, and not of CDFA; therefore, CDFA would probably not be in a position to respond or to do anything. A more appropriate course may be to submit a letter directly to the USDA. Discussion continued.

A motion was made to write a letter to the Secretary of CDFA requesting support for the Apiary Board's inquiry to the USDA regarding more information and clarification on the censorship of their scientist. The motion was seconded. Voting took place with the following results:

Ayes: Roger Everett, Bob Brandi, Brian Ashurst, David Bradshaw, Harold “Buzz” Landon
Nays: None

Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively planned for November, 2016 in San Diego, to coincide with next year’s California State Beekeeper’s Association Convention.

Discussion followed regarding meeting notices not getting to Board members. It was decided that Ms. Albrecht would send meeting notices, meeting minutes for approval, etc. to all Board members, rather than sending information just to the Board chair.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded. Voting took place with the following results:

Ayes: Roger Everett, Bob Brandi, Brian Ashurst, David Bradshaw, Harold “Buzz” Landon
Nays: None

Meeting adjourned at 5:53 PM.